

NATIONAL CANNERS ASSOCIATION



Information Letter



FOR N. C. A. MEMBERS

No. 301

Washington, D. C.

April 13, 1929

CONTENTS

	Page		Page
Peach prospects favorable in southern states	1421	Bulletin on distribution in southwest issued	1429
Reduced fruit crop indicated	1421	Isle of Pines grapefruit industry still below par	1429
Truck crop prospects	1422	Bulletin on sweet potato growing	1429
Weather conditions	1422	Peach testing device	1429
Truck crop markets	1422	May beetles scheduled to appear this spring	1429
Trend of retail trade	1423	Large autumn crop of grapefruit indicated in Porto Rico	1430
Farm marketing officials to meet at Washington	1423	Damage caused by vegetable weevil and thrips	1430
National wholesale conference	1424	Effect of storage on vitamin content of canned foods	1430
Federal Board officials promoted	1426	Leaflets issued on bean growing	1431
Business conditions	1426	Raw products grading in Pennsylvania	1431
Freight rate hearings	1427	Pea breeding and seed testing work in Wisconsin	1432
Fish canning in south Atlantic states	1427		
California freeze damage	1428		
Nova Scotia canned foods industry	1428		
Reports available from Commerce Department	1428		

Peach Prospects Favorable in Southern States

Reports on the condition of peaches in ten southern States show that with the exception of portions of Oklahoma and Alabama prospects are still very favorable. The April 1 condition of peaches in the ten States averaged 83.3 per cent compared with 83.5 per cent last year and 55.6 two years ago.

The condition of peaches in the southern States on April 1 of the last three years has been as follows:

State	1927 Per cent	1928 Per cent	1929 Per cent
North Carolina	43	80	89
South Carolina	40	83	83
Georgia	53	83	84
Florida	76	76	84
Alabama	60	80	78
Mississippi	63	80	82
Arkansas	63	83	88
Louisiana	70	76	81
Oklahoma	34	73	60
Texas	67	76	86
Average	55.6	83.3	83.3

Reduced Fruit Crop Indicated

Indications on April 10 point to a reduced supply of fruit this season, according to the Department of Agriculture. It is, of course, too early for definite estimates, but frost has caused widespread losses in California, the severe winter has damaged fruit buds, especially peaches, in portions of the North Central States, drouth conditions have adversely affected both Florida

and California, and the recent warm weather has forced many eastern fruit trees into blooming so early that further damage from frost is not unlikely.

In the Pacific Northwest conditions so far appear to be below average, but they seem much more favorable than in California.

The most promising fruit prospects this season appear to be in the peach sections of the Southern States from North Carolina to Texas.

Truck Crop Prospects

The Division of Crop and Livestock Estimates of the Department of Agriculture issued, under date of April 11, the following revised acreage and production forecasts:

Snap beans. The acreage in early states is estimated at 19 per cent below that of 1928. The fall crop acreage (exclusive of Florida, which had 12,500 acres in the fall of 1927, but was not reported last fall) is reduced almost 16 per cent, making a combined acreage decrease, so far as reported, of more than 18 per cent. The indicated early (spring) production is 14 per cent less than in 1928; the fall crop, on acreage reported, is only 6 per cent less; combined fall and spring crops, 12 per cent smaller than the 1928 crop.

Cabbage. A revised estimate of acreage in second early states indicates a 28 per cent increase, which, with 17 per cent increase in early acreage, makes a 21 per cent combined increase for the states reported. The indicated yield to date averages lighter than in 1928, and prospective production for all states reported is 12 per cent greater than last year.

Peas. An increase of 4 per cent is indicated in second early crop acreage and 34 per cent in early acreage, or 10 per cent combined. Yields are indicated to be generally lower than last year, and the prospective crop is accordingly estimated to be but 2 per cent heavier than in 1928 in second early states and 20 per cent greater in early states, or a combined increase of 4 per cent. On an acreage 80 per cent larger, the fall crop in the Imperial Valley was two-thirds greater than in the fall of 1927.

Strawberries. The acreage in second early states is now indicated to be about 11 per cent below 1928, and prospective production 9 per cent below. Estimated early acreage was 10 per cent larger than last year and production about 21 per cent greater, making a combined acreage as reported to date 2.5 per cent less than in 1928 and prospective production 2 per cent more.

Weather Conditions

Under the influence of abnormally warm weather, and mostly ample soil moisture, vegetation of all kinds made exceptional progress throughout the Central and Eastern States during the week ended November 9, according to the Weather Bureau. The recent summerlike conditions have advanced growth in the central States of the eastern half of the country until the season is now 10 days to two weeks, or more, in advance of an average year.

Fruits especially are unfavorably advanced. Early varieties have come into bloom as far north as northern Indiana and southern Iowa, and, as this is two or three weeks earlier than the average date of last killing frosts in these latitudes, there is much danger of harm from a later freeze; even apples are blooming northward to West Virginia and central Indiana.

In the Pacific Northwest, however, the prevailing cold weather retarded fruit, but some frost damage was done to that out, and further injury was reported from northern California.

Field work made good progress in most areas, especially in the Southeast, but rain near the close of the period, or continued wet soil, caused further interruption in some interior sections, particularly in the upper Mississippi Valley and the Lake region. Spring plantings, in general, advanced better than in recent weeks. Rain is still needed on Florida uplands, in the west-central Great Plains, parts of the Southwest, and in some far Western States.

Truck crops made rapid growth under the favorable weather and good condition was noted generally; it was too dry in parts of Florida, but rains were of benefit in California.

Truck Crop Markets

The combined shipments of 24 leading fruits and vegetables decreased further to 15,245 cars during the week ended April 6, or 1,000 less than the preceding week, but 3,000 more than a year ago. The only products to show material increases were asparagus, peas, string beans, strawberries, and new-crop onions. Green peas, mostly from the Imperial Valley of California, filled 190 cars last week, as against 55 during early April, 1928. Shipments of apples required only 690 cars, one-third from the East and the others from western sections.

Intended plantings of string beans in six second-early States are only 23,180 acres. Last season's total in this same group was 27,890 and two years ago 24,480. Every one of the states—Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana—reports a material decrease from its 1928 spring acreage. During the past week, Florida originated 190 and Texas 110 cars of beans. The corresponding total last season was only 95 cars. Texas haulings were quite heavy.

Cucumber shipments from Florida were a little lighter than the week before, and required only 250 cars. Movement for the same period in 1928 was but 20 cars. Florida is estimated to have 9,000 acres in cucumbers this spring, and Texas 5,680. Four second-early States may plant 7,570 acres, compared with 9,100 last season. Each State shows a reduction. California expects 1,000, Arkansas 1,580, North Carolina about 3,700 and Virginia 1,300 acres of cucumbers.

Supplies of new-crop vegetables and berries were rapidly increasing. The Florida strawberry output had dropped to 35 cars last week, but Louisiana jumped to 520 cars, compared with 315 during the same period of 1928. The Alabama season opened with a rush and 130 carloads came from that State. The 60 cars from Texas points were three times as many as a year ago.

Only 95 cars of northern and western onions were shipped. Compared with 290 cars during the first week of April, 1928, Texas movement was very active, with a total of 460 last week.

Arizona forwardings of lettuce increased rapidly to 585 cars last week, but Imperial Valley decreased to 150 and South Carolina to 65 cars. The North Carolina lettuce season opened.

Asparagus shipments doubled to a total of 345 cars, of which 210 came from California, 105 from South Carolina and 30 from Georgia.

Plantings of spring spinach in five States are estimated at 9,760 acres, compared with 8,390 last year. Virginia shipments decreased last week to 250 cars, and Texas forwarded only 70. The total of 370 was scarcely more than half as many as the week before.

Carlot movement of tomatoes decreased temporarily to 230 cars of domestic stock and 280 imported. Imports were mainly from Mexico, with a few from Cuba. Tomato plantings in five intermediate States are reported to total the same as last year, or 25,760 acres. Gains in some sections are offset by losses elsewhere. Decreases are noted in Arkansas and

Utah, but a considerable increase in New Jersey. About 13,340 acres, or more than half the intermediate total, are indicated for New Jersey. Utah expects to have 7,650 acres and Arkansas about 2,800.

Movement of cabbage from Texas decreased to 365 cars and Florida shipments dropped to 55. South Carolina increased to 305 during the week, while Alabama shipped 50 cars. The lighter total of 795 cars, however, was just twice as many as moved during early April, 1928. Old cabbage was about cleaned up.

CARLOT SHIPMENTS

Commodity	Mar. 30- April 6 1929	Mar. 24-30 1929	April 1-7 1928	Total this season to April 6	Total last season to April 7	Total last season
Apples, total	692	891	324	122,784	98,378	98,694
Eastern states	239	360	212	60,483	48,654	44,413
Western states	453	534	312	62,301	49,724	54,281
Asparagus	343	174	341	391	979	2,878
Cabbage, 1929 season	793	1,115	393	10,013	7,785	38,505
Carrots, 1929 season	294	271	133	4,372	2,653	7,436
Cauliflower	206	198	121	8,278	7,968	9,046
Green peas:						
Domestic	197	83	31	886	886	4,888
Imports	4	29	2	1,339	987	887
Mixed vegetables:						
Domestic	903	824	783	10,114	10,370	38,880
Imports	4	6	28	140	309	398
Pears	39	38	18	21,268	18,705	18,744
Peppers:						
Domestic	77	98	129	801	1,169	3,367
Imports	10	29	19	326	641	748
Spinach	370	644	518	8,144	7,949	10,391
Strawberries	730	187	440	2,433	928	18,715
String beans:	303	207	93	1,888	1,830	6,707
Tomatoes:						
Domestic	231	382	323	4,071	1,967	30,357
Imports	274	391	423	4,872	4,003	5,323

Trend of Retail Trade

Total sales of department stores in March were 6 per cent larger, and average daily sales 10 per cent larger, than in the corresponding month a year ago, according to preliminary reports made to the Federal reserve system by 489 stores. An increase in total sales was reported by 349 stores and a decrease by 140 stores. Increases in total sales were reported in all Federal reserve districts except the Minneapolis district; they were greatest in the Richmond, Chicago, and New York districts.

Farm Marketing Officials to Meet at Washington

A meeting of State and Federal agricultural marketing officials will be held at Washington on April 16, to consider mutual problems of eastern farmers in marketing this year's farm crops. Representatives of all States along the Atlantic Seaboard, comprising the Atlantic States Division of the National Association of Marketing Officials, will participate in the con-

ference, which will be held at the Bureau of Agricultural Economics.

Topics for consideration at the meeting will include the marketing of potatoes in small sacks, New England grading and labeling regulations, shipping point auctions, egg grading and identification, licensing and bonding of commission merchants, grading of produce for canning houses, and apple export requirements.

National Wholesale Conference

The final meeting of the National Wholesale Conference under the auspices of the U. S. Chamber of Commerce, it is announced, will be held in Washington, April 26 and 27. Since the first meeting of the conference more than a year ago, four standing committees composed of 64 business men engaged in wholesaling in many lines of trade and the various sections of the country have been devoting attention to the problems of the wholesaler's functions and services; the economic factors affecting wholesaling, such as group buying, chain stores, and mail order houses; business analysis, costs of distribution from the viewpoint of customers, trading areas, and profitable sizes of orders and shipments; and credits, sales, terms, and collections.

Federal Board Officials Promoted

James O. Clarke, chief of the New York Station of the Eastern District of the Food, Drug, and Insecticide Administration, has been promoted to the position of chief of the Central District, with headquarters at Chicago, succeeding E. H. Goodnow, who has resigned. Joseph Callaway, Jr., has been appointed chief of the New York Station to succeed Mr. Clarke.

Business Conditions

Check payments during the week ended April 6 showed a gain over both the previous week and the same period of last year, according to the weekly statement of the Department of Commerce. Operations in steel plants were on a higher plane than in either the preceding week or the corresponding week of 1928. Distribution of goods, as indicated by carloadings for the latest available period, showed a gain over last year.

The general level of wholesale prices showed a recession from the preceding week but was on about the same plane as a year ago. Prices for iron and steel averaged higher than

in either period, while prices for cotton and copper, averaging lower than in the previous week, were higher than a year ago. Loans and discounts of Federal reserve member banks showed further expansion, as compared with both the preceding week and the same period of last year.

Business failures were greater in number than a year ago, but showed a decline from the preceding week.

CAR LOADINGS

	Total	Miscellaneous	Merchandise L. C. L.	Other
Week ended March 30	887,829	313,244	265,851	308,734
Preceding week	888,898	308,374	268,148	312,376
Corresponding week, 1928	948,743	378,563	261,652	308,528
Corresponding week, 1927	886,182	300,083	263,980	322,119

Freight Rate Hearings

Oral argument in the case involving rates on canned foods between points in California and in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Montana will be held before the Interstate Commerce Commission at Washington on May 16. As noted in the Information Letter for March 23, the examiner recommended to the Commission that the schedules filed by the carriers be found justified in part, but that these schedules be ordered cancelled without prejudice to the filing of new schedules in accordance with the examiner's recommendations.

A hearing in the case involving the complaint filed by the Michigan Cannery Association as to the rates on empty tin cans in carloads from the Chicago switching district to various points in Michigan will be held at Chicago on May 20, before Examiner Smith.

A hearing in the complaint involving the rates on canned foods from Watertown and Winsted, Minn., to points in California will be held at Chicago on May 20 before Examiner Smith. As noted in the Information Letter for March 2, the Interstate Commerce Commission had found these rates not unreasonable, but upon application of the complainant, reopened the case for further hearing.

Fish Canning in South Atlantic States

There were 67 establishments engaged in the canning and by-products trade in the South Atlantic States in 1927, and they produced commodities (mainly canned oysters and shrimp and menhaden products) valued at \$4,372,636. North Carolina, with 35 canning and by-products establishments producing commodities valued at \$1,547,679, ranked as the most important

State in this trade. Georgia was second with commodities valued at \$1,113,951, while Florida and South Carolina ranked in the order named.

California Freeze Damage

Latest reports confirm earlier statements of serious damage to California deciduous fruits by freezes in early April, according to telegraphic word received by the Crop Reporting Board on April 11 from E. E. Kaufman, the Federal-State Statistician for California. A preliminary investigation of the loss indicates that apricots will make less than half a crop, peaches not over a half crop, and almonds probably one-third. Pears and prunes were injured but the extent is uncertain, cherries and plums were severely injured and Thompson seedless grapes injured perhaps 25 per cent. Other grape damage was only slight.

Nova Scotia Canned Foods Industry

Of the canned fruits and vegetables packed in Nova Scotia practically no stock has been carried over, according to the American vice consul at Halifax. Pumpkin, peas, baked beans, string beans, strawberries, pears, and raspberries are packed in small quantities, but canned apples form the most important article, and one of the largest canneries states that its last year's stock of canned apples is practically cleared out.

The canning of fruits and vegetables in Nova Scotia is still a minor industry, but it appears to be becoming more stable than in the past. No important changes have occurred in the cost of material and labor entering into the Nova Scotia industry, although it still seems to suffer from the apparent unwillingness or inability of the local farmers to supply the canneries with sufficient fruits and vegetables to meet the demands of the industry.

Reports Available from Commerce Department

Efforts of the Fisheries Experimental Stations of the Canadian Biological Board to perfect a brine freezing process for the marketing of fish are described in a report from the American consul general at Halifax, which will be loaned to interested American firms upon application to the Department of Commerce or any of its district or cooperative offices.

The Department has also received and will loan a comprehensive report on the market for canned milk in southern Scotland, received from the American consul at Edinburgh.

Bulletin on Distribution in Southwest Issued

Under the title "Transcontinental and Intercoastal Trade of the Pacific Southwest in 1926," the Domestic Commerce Division of the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce has published a report on the distribution of goods in the five southwestern states, California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico. Shipments of the major commodity groups are shown by origin and destination, and a supplementary statement shows the car-lot express shipments of agricultural products moved out of California.

Isle of Pines Grapefruit Industry Still Below Par

The Isle of Pines has not yet sufficiently recovered from the hurricane of 1926 to permit the grapefruit industry, its principal business, to reach the high level of that year, according to the American vice consul at Nueva Gerona. Grapefruit shipments during 1928 to the United States and foreign markets were approximately 160,000 crates, compared with 244,000 crates during 1926.

A Cuban company began experiments during 1928 with Isle of Pines grapefruit for canning purposes. Fruit was shipped at a price that enabled some growers to clean up their groves at a reduced cost, they reported.

Bulletin on Sweet Potato Growing

Approved practices for sweet potato growers are summarized in a 6-page bulletin issued by the North Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station at Raleigh. It presents information as to varieties, seed stock, plants, plant bed, seed treatment, plant treatment, soil types, fertilizers, cultural methods, harvesting, and storage.

Peach Testing Device

A device for determining the texture of peach fruits for shipping and marketing is described in Circular 212 issued by the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station at New Brunswick. The basic principle of the tester is a high quality spring against which a plunger operates within a tube, with a pressure scale on the tube covering a range of 1 to 15 pounds.

May Beetles Scheduled to Appear This Spring

May beetles, or "June bugs" as they are sometimes called, are scheduled to appear this spring in accordance with their 3-year life cycle. An abundance of the beetles this year will indi-

cate an abundance of their young next year—the common white grub or “grubworms” so destructive to such crops as corn, timothy, strawberries, beans, and potatoes.

Entomologists of the Department of Agriculture make no predictions as to the probable abundance of the beetles this year, but it is reasonably certain, they say, that they will continue to be exceptionally abundant in the infested regions every three years unless killed off by their natural enemies, by artificial means, or by unfavorable climatic conditions. The infested area includes parts of Minnesota, Iowa, South Dakota, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Pennsylvania and New York.

Injury from the grubs can be prevented by the proper farm practice. Suggested practices and control methods are discussed in Farmer's Bulletin No. 940-F, “Common White Grubs,” recently revised by the Department of Agriculture. Copies of the bulletin may be obtained by writing to the United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

Large Autumn Crop of Grapefruit Indicated in Porto Rico

The grapefruit trees in Porto Rico are blossoming heavily, promising a large crop which will begin to mature late next October, according to cabled information received by the U. S. Department of Commerce.

Damage Caused by Vegetable Weevil and Thrips

The Insect Pest Survey Bulletin for April 1 notes that the vegetable weevil is reported as causing very serious damage in many parts of Mississippi.

The onion thrips is seriously affecting several hundred acres of onions in the Laredo district of Texas. It appears that in this district broccoli acts as an alternate host plant for this thrips.

Effect of Storage on Vitamin Content of Canned Foods

Frequent inquiries are made as to the effect of storage on the vitamin content of canned foods. The only accurate procedure in determining this would be to test the same lot of canned foods shortly after canning and again after a given period of storage, and even this procedure is limited in its accuracy because of the fact that at the two different dates different groups of animals raised under different conditions must be used.

Although there is a considerable amount of data on the effect of canning on the vitamin content of canned foods, there is a scarcity of data on the effect of subsequent storage. With this week's Information Letter is enclosed a reprint furnishing such data on spinach, which shows that in a three-year storage period spinach does not lose any detectable amounts of vitamins A, B and C.

There is considerable other evidence that commercially canned foods do not lose appreciable amounts of vitamins during their normal storage period. Givens and McClugage, of the University of Rochester, found that commercially canned tomatoes three years after canning were practically as potent in vitamin C as raw tomatoes, although the raw tomatoes from which these canned tomatoes were produced were not tested.

In the cooperative studies of the National Cannery Association with Columbia University, it was found that canned apples eight months after canning were still the equivalent in vitamin content of raw apples tested at the time of canning. Also that strawberries canned in Oregon were the equivalent sixteen months after canning of raw strawberries purchased on the New York market. There is no reason to suspect that the latter were lower in vitamin C content than the Oregon strawberries at the time of canning.

Leaflets Issued on Bean Growing

The Extension Division of Michigan State College has issued two leaflets by George E. Starr dealing with the growing of lima beans and string beans, respectively, for the canning factory. These leaflets present in condensed form information with respect to variety of seeds, soils and soil preparation, cultivation, fertilizers, and harvesting.

Raw Products Grading in Pennsylvania

A 13-page illustrated bulletin on improving quality by grading cannery products has been issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture, in which is given an account of the work with tomatoes, apples and grapes.

A total of approximately 8,842,000 pounds of raw cannery products were inspected and classified by inspectors of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture during 1928, consisting of 5,653,000 pounds of grapes, 2,284,000 pounds of apples and 905,000 pounds of tomatoes.

The bulletin states that although the graded system of selling raw cannery products is new in Pennsylvania, the success

of the work done in 1928 indicates that the use of the system will increase. Growers and canners, according to the bulletin, believe that returns should be based on quality, and that supervised inspection is the fairest method for determining quality.

Pea Breeding and Seed Testing Work in Wisconsin

Because of Wisconsin's leading position in the pea canning industry, the Agricultural Experiment Station at Madison has for a number of years carried on intensive breeding investigations. In reporting upon this work, the director of the station in his last annual report discusses seed stock testing and the breeding work.

Seed peas from stocks in use by seed dealers, as well as samples representing seed stock delivered to, and being grown by, canners, are planted in comparative plots, and the purity and desirability of the various lots noted. This is done each year, and has been responsible for the elimination of many inferior stocks and strains of seed peas. This work has the cooperation of most seedsmen and many canners, who obtain a clear cut understanding of the merits of their seed peas by visiting the comparative plots on the Station farm.

Over 3,000 seed pea trials were made during the season of 1928 at the Ashland and Peninsular Branch Stations, in addition to several hundred at the Madison Station. At present the efforts are chiefly directed along the following lines:

The production of early types of sweet canning peas of greater vigor, more uniform type, and specific resistance to disease, especially *Fusarium* wilt.

The production of more uniform types of Alaska peas. (Most Alaska pea types are conspicuously lacking in uniformity.)

The production and increase of midseason varieties which will be available for canning between the present early, and late varieties.

Studies of the occurrence of "rogues" and other variations in peas.

Several very promising new lines and selections have been made, and many of these are now being increased by seed companies and canning companies. "Primal" is an early type of sweet canning pea that has given a good account in the trials, as has also a selection from No. 4120 (Surprise X Horsford). "Alcross" and "No. 19 Alaska" look the best of the new Alaska types. "Acme" and "Ashford" are the most promising of the medium and late sweet varieties.